

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 39 are pending in the present application, of which claims 1 - 3, 14, 26, 27, 28, 33, 38 and 39 have been amended. New claim 40 has been added. No new matter has been added. Applicants believe that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated March 19, 2003.

Claim Objections:

Claims 38 and 39 stand objected due to minor informalities pointed out in page 2 of the Action. However, claims 38 and 39 have been amended to overcome this objection. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is requested.

As To The Merits:

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner maintains the following rejections:

claims 1-27, 31, 32, 36, 37, 38 and 39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Watanabe (of record) in view of Sukegawa et al. (of record) and Nakamura, et al. (of record); and

claims 28-30, 33, 34 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Watanabe in view of Sukegawa et al., Bradley et al. (of record) and Nakamura, et al.

Each of these rejections are respectfully traversed.

Further, each of the independent claims have been amended to call for an unique feature of the present invention concerning that the digital camera is not only for taking a photograph for the passport but for also monitoring the applicants from a remote site e.g., passport center 6, as described in page 17, lines 9 - 11 and page 19, lines 2 - 4.

It is respectfully submitted that this feature is not disclosed in any of the cited references. According to this feature, the passport transaction apparatus can improve security, because terrorists or criminals can be easily distinguished when they apply for a new passport or a reissued passport by a monitoring function. The digital camera is used not only for mugshots but also for monitoring, the terrorists or criminals may not aware that they are monitored. That is, the present invention is effective for preventing terrorism or international crimes.

Further, in response to the argument that the authentication in Nakamura is being performed in the data terminal device and not by connecting to a financial institution, as called for in each of the independent claims, the Examiner asserts that “Nakamura teaches communicating over a cable to a computer, so that the authentication does not take place in the data terminal (column 5, lines 57 through column 6, line 11; Figures 1 and 3).¹

¹Please see, the last three lines of page 37 of the Action.

However, while Nakamura may disclose that each of the terminal devices 20 are connected to a store controller 28 by means of an electrical cable 30, as illustrated in Fig. 3 of Nakamura, the store controller 28 fails to constitute a financial institution that executes an authentication of the applicant, as called for in the present claimed invention.

That is, according to Nakamura:

In the present embodiment, it is assumed that the minicomputer 38 in the controller 28 provides the data processing functions of the present checkout system with the microprocessor 66 of the terminal device 20 controlling the flow of data between the terminal device 20 and the card reader 24 in addition to checking the identification of the customer.²

Thus, from the above, it is clear that Nakamura fails to disclose connecting to a financial institution which executes an authentication of the applicant, as called for in the present claimed invention. Instead, Nakamura merely discloses that the code read by card reader 24 is checked against the code entered by the customer in the security check keyboard 70 by the processing functions of the store controller 28 within a specific store.

In addition, with regard to newly added claims 38 and 39 which call for a passport transaction apparatus which communicates with a plurality of host computers, and carries out authentication, handling payment procedure from the account, and issuing procedure of the passport, while in Watanabe, Sukegawa, Bradley and Nakamura, the peripheral apparatus communicates only one host computer, the Examiner takes the following position:

No one of the references discloses communication with multiple host computers, but the references disclose communications with databases of different information, etc.,

²Please see, lines 29 - 35, column 4 of Nakamura.

so communicating with multiple computers, each containing a database of a different kind of relevant data, is held to be obvious from the combination of references.³

However, the Examiner's comments seem to be overreaching since each of claims 38 and 39 call for specific features concerning the plurality of host computers.

That is, claim 38 calls for *the data required in the procedure of the filing includes a PIN of an applicant for the passport, the control section communicates with the first host computer and the third host computer through the communication unit so as to identify the applicant based on a result of authentication by the PIN and so as to carry out a procedure for the payment from the account specified by the PIN.*

In addition, claim 39 calls for *the data required in the procedure of the filing includes a PIN of an applicant for the passport, the control section indirectly communicates with the second host computer and the third host computer through the first computer, the control section transmits the PIN to the first host computer through the communication unit so as to identify the applicant according to the PIN and so as to carry out a procedure for the payment from the account specified by the PIN.*

It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has failed to rely on any of the applied references for teaching these features of claims 38 and 39. Instead, the Examiner merely concludes that such features are obvious.

³Please see, lines 8 - 12, page 38 of the Action.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, the claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

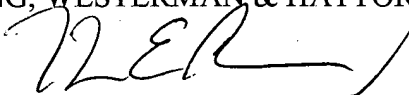
If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosures: Version with markings to show changes made

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE 09/199,566

Claims 1 - 3, 14, 26, 27, 28, 33, 38 and 39 have been amended to read as follows:

1. (Five Times Amended) A passport transaction apparatus connected to a residents database storing therein identification data of the residents and also connected to a center which executes an examination for issuance of passports through a communication line, said apparatus comprising:
 - a communication unit for communicating with said center;
 - an image input unit for inputting an image of an applicant for a passport;
 - a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure for the passport transaction;
 - a data input unit for inputting data for the application according to the procedure for passport transaction displayed on said display unit;
 - a sign input for inputting a sign of the applicant; and
 - a control section for transmitting the data inputted by each of said input units to said center by using said communication unit and orchestrating said center so as to determine whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not based on the identification data for the applicant which has been recorded in said resident data base and on each of the transmitted input data;

wherein the image input unit is also used for monitoring the applicant at a remote site,
and the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution that executes an authentication of the applicant, [and] so that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

2. (Four Times Amended) A passport transaction apparatus connected through a communication line to a center which executes an examination for issuance of passports as well

as to a residents database which stores identification data of residents for providing services for issuing passports to applicants, said apparatus comprising:

- a communication unit for communicating with said center and with said residents database;
- an image input unit for inputting an image of an applicant for a passport;
- a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure for the passport transaction;
- a data input unit for inputting data for the application according to procedure for passport transaction displayed on said display unit;
- a sign input unit for inputting a sign of the applicant; and
- a control section for transmitting the data inputted by each of said input units and the identification data of the applicant fetched using said communication unit to said center by using said communication unit and orchestrating said center so as to determine whether the passport is to be issued or not based on the transmitted data;

wherein the image input unit is also used for monitoring the applicant at a remote site,
and the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution that executes an authentication of the applicant, [and] so that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

3. (Four Times Amended) A passport transaction apparatus connected to a center which provides the data for issuance of a certificate for an applicant and executes examination for issuance of passports for processing passport transactions through communication with the center via a communication line, said apparatus comprising:

a communication unit for communicating with said center;

an image input unit for inputting an image of the applicant;

a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure [for the procedure] for the passport transaction;

a data input unit for inputting data for passport transaction according to the procedure displayed on said display unit;

a printer unit for printing the image inputted by the image input unit and contents of the passport on a passport paper prepared previously;

an issuer unit for issuing a passport obtained by printing with said printer unit; and

a control unit for controlling the communications by said communication unit, image input by said image input unit, display by said display unit, data input by said data input unit and issuance of a passport by said issuer unit;

wherein the image input unit is also used for monitoring the applicant at a remote site, and said control unit sends the data inputted by each of said input units to said center using said communication unit and orchestrates said center so as to determine whether the passport is to be issued or not, and when it is determined that the passport is to be issued, makes the printer unit print the image of the applicant inputted by said image input unit and contents of the passport onto a passport paper prepared previously, and makes the issuer unit issue the passport obtained by printing;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution that executes an authentication of the applicant, [and] so that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

14. (Four Times Amended) A passport transaction apparatus for processing passport transactions with a storage medium which stores the data required for issuance of passports and the data for identifying applicants for passports, said apparatus comprising:

- an image input unit for inputting an image of the applicant;
- a reader unit for reading out the data from said storage medium;
- a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure for the passport transaction;
- a data input unit for inputting data for passport transactions according to the procedure for passport transaction displayed on said display unit;
- a printer unit for printing an image inputted by said image input unit and the contents of the passport onto a passport paper previously prepared;
- an issuer unit for issuing a passport obtained by printing with said printing unit;
- a control unit for controlling the communications by said communication unit, image input by said image input unit, display by said display unit, reading by said reader unit, data input by said data input unit and issuance of a passport by the issuing unit;

wherein the image input unit is also used for monitoring the applicant at a remote site, and said control unit determines whether the applied passport is to be issued or not based on the data read out by said reading unit, and when it is determined that the passport is to be issued, prints the image of applicant inputted by said image input unit and the contents of the passport previously printed onto a passport paper using the printing unit and issues the passport obtained by printing using the issuing unit; and

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution that executes an authentication of the applicant, [and] so that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

26. (Four Times Amended) A passport transaction method applicable to a system in which a system is connected via a communication line to a center for providing data for issuance of a certificate to an applicant and executing examination for issuance of a passport for processing passport transactions via communication with the center, said method comprising:

monitoring an applicant;

[a first step of] inputting data for checking [an] the applicant;

[a second step of] accessing said center and determining whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not by using the data inputted [in the first step];

[a third step of] inputting, when it is determined [in the second step] that the applied for passport is to be issued, an image of the applicant; and

[a fourth step of] printing the image of the applicant and contents of description on the passport [for inputting in the third step] onto passport paper previously prepared, and issuing the passport obtained by printing;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution that executes an authentication of the applicant, [and] so that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

27. (Five Times Amended) A passport transaction method applicable to a system for processing passport transactions with a storage medium storing therein data required for issuance of passports as well as data for identifying applications for passports comprising:

monitoring an applicant;

[a first step of] reading out data required for issuance of a passport from the storage medium and data for identifying an applicant;

[a second step of] determining whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not according to the data read out in the [first step] reading out data;

[a third step of] inputting, when it is determined [in the second step] that the applied for passport is to be issued, an image of the applicant; and

[a fourth step of] printing the image of the applicant inputted and contents of description on the passport [inputted in the third step] and issuing the passport printed [obtained by printing];

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution that executes an authentication of the applicant, [and] so that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

28. (Six Times Amended) A passport transaction system comprising:
a center accessibly connected to a first database storing therein data for issuing certificates to applicants, registering data for issuance of passports in a second database, and executing examination for issuance of passports; and

at least one passport transaction apparatus connected via a communication line to said center for processing passport transactions by communicating with said center; wherein said passport transaction apparatus comprises

a communication unit for communicating with said center;

an image input unit for monitoring the applicant and for inputting an image of the applicant for a passport;

a display unit for displaying a guidance for the procedure for passport transaction;

a data input unit for inputting data for passport transaction according to the contents of procedure displayed on the display unit;

a printer unit for printing the image inputted by the image input unit and contents of description on the passport onto a passport paper previously prepared;

an issuer unit for issuing the passport obtained by printing with said printer unit; and

a control unit for controlling the communications by said communication unit, image input by said image input unit, display by said display unit, data input by said data input unit and issuance of a passport by said issuer unit; while the control unit accesses the center using the communication unit, transmits the monitored image of the applicant to the center, asks the center to make determination as to whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not according to the data inputted by the data input unit, and when it is determined that the applied for passport is to be issued, has an image of the applicant inputted by the image input unit and contents of description of the passport printed onto passport paper previously prepared and the passport obtained by printing issued with the issuing unit; and the center verifies the data inputted by the data input unit according to a request from the passport transaction apparatus to the first and

second databases respectively by the way of communication with the communication unit and returns a reply as to whether each applied for passport is to be issued or not according to a result of verification;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution that executes an authentication of the applicant, [and] so that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

33. (Four Times Amended) A passport transaction system comprising:
- a first center having a first database with data required for issuance of certificates for applicants registered therein;
 - a second center for registering data for issuance of passports in a second database and also executing examination for issuance of passports; and
 - at least one passport transaction apparatus each connected via a communication line to the first and second centers for processing passport transactions for communicating with the first and second centers; wherein said passport transaction apparatus comprises:
 - a communication unit for communicating with the first and second centers;
 - an image input unit for monitoring the applicant and for inputting an image of an applicant for a passport;
 - a display unit for providing guidance with displays of contents of procedure for passport transactions;
 - a data input unit for inputting data for passport transactions according to the contents of procedure displayed on the displayed unit;

a printing unit for printing the image inputted by the image input unit and contents of description of the passport onto passport paper previously prepared;

an issuing unit for issuing a passport obtained by printing with the printing unit;

a control unit for providing controls over communication by the communication unit, image input by the image input unit, displays by the display unit, data input by the data input unit, and issuance of passports by the issuing unit; while the control unit accesses the first and second centers respectively using the communication unit, verifies an applicant for a passport according to the data inputted with the data input unit, makes determination as to whether an applied for passport is to be issued or not, and when it is determined that the applied for passport is to be issued, has the image of the applicant inputted by the image input unit and contents of description on the passport printed with the printing unit onto passport paper previously prepared and also has the passport obtained by printing issued with the issuing unit;

the first center verifies the data inputted by the data input unit according to a request for verification of an applicant for passport from the passport transaction apparatus to the first database by way of communication with the communication unit and returns a reply according to a result of verification as to whether the applicant is the person he claims to be or not; and

the second center verifies the data inputted by the data input unit according to a request from the passport transaction apparatus by way of communicating with the communication unit to the second database and returns a reply according to a result of verification as to whether the applied for passport is to be issued or not;

wherein the passport transaction apparatus is connected to a financial institution that executes an authentication of the applicant, [and] so that the passport transaction apparatus identifies the applicant based on a result of the authentication.

38. (Amended) A passport transaction apparatus that communicates with a first host computer which handles issuance of passports, a second host computer which handles data of residents, and a third host computer which handles payment from an account, comprising:

a communication unit that communicates with [either] one of the first, second, and third host computers;

a display unit that displays a guidance for filing an application for a passport;

a data input unit that inputs data required in a procedure of the filing;

an image input unit that inputs an image required for the passport;

a signature input unit that inputs a signature as [a] data; and

a control section that controls the communication unit, the image input unit, the display unit, the data input unit, and the signature input unit; wherein

the data required in the procedure of the filing includes a PIN of an applicant for the passport, the control section communicates with the first host computer and the third host computer through the communication unit so as to identify the applicant based on a result of [the] authentication by the PIN and so as to carry out a procedure for the payment from the account specified by the PIN.

39. (Amended) A passport transaction apparatus that communicates with a first host computer for handling issuance of passports and capable of communicating with a second host computer which handles data of residents so as to obtain [a] residential data, and capable of communicating with a third host computer which handles payment from an account so as to identify the applicant based on a result of the authentication by the PIN, comprising:[:]

- a communication unit that communicates with the first host computer;
- a display unit that displays a guidance for filing an application for a passport;
- a data input unit that inputs data required in a procedure of the filing;
- an image input unit that inputs an image required for the passport;
- a signature input unit that inputs a signature as [a] data; and
- a control section that controls the communication unit, the image input unit, the display unit, the data input unit, and the signature input unit; wherein

the data required in the procedure of the filing includes a PIN of an applicant for the passport, the control section indirectly communicates with the second host computer and the third host computer through the first computer, the control section transmits the PIN to the first host computer through the communication unit so as to identify the applicant according to the PIN and so as to carry out a procedure for the payment from the account specified by the PIN.